

Dear Friends,

Alongside this email, we are again having an online service at 11.00am. Thank you for all who attended last week. It was lovely to see so many faces. I am sorry about the sound problems. I think I have worked out how to make things better this week.

The service will include a **love feast**, which is a symbolic fellowship meal that goes back to the early years of Methodism. To join in, you will need something to eat and drink. I shall use a biscuit and a glass of water.

If you would like to come along to the worship and have the internet, then please contact me for details.

I look forward to sharing with you.

Take care, stay safe  
and God bless

**Rev Ken**

Tel: 020 8756 0567 Email: [ken.kingston@methodist.org.uk](mailto:ken.kingston@methodist.org.uk)

*PS I am away for the next two Sundays. So there will be no emails for Sunday 19 July and Sunday 26 July. If you would look to attend an online 'Zoom' service then contact Prima ([hahemcoffice@btinternet.com](mailto:hahemcoffice@btinternet.com)) and she will have more information and log-in details.*

---

You can find this week's YouTube reflection at

[https://youtu.be/PmDngp\\_xT5k](https://youtu.be/PmDngp_xT5k) (available from 7.00am on Sunday)

Or you can read it for yourself below ...

### **Buddleia and buckets** (Matthew 13:1-9. 18-23)

I used to go past a railway bridge every week. It was one of the giant brick marvels of Victorian engineering towering above me. But clinging to the side of the bridge a buddleia plant had taken root. And against all the odds was flourishing! (I'll come back to that later.)

Jesus tells his disciples the Parable of the Sower. We may have heard it many times, but it is worth hearing again. It is about how the seed – the word of God – is received, and how it grows (or doesn't). Some seed falls on hard ground where it can't put roots down, some falls on a path where it spotted by birds who gobble it up, some falls among weeds where it grows but is eventually choked by the plants around it. And some lands on fertile soil where it grows abundantly.

It's so easy to think that we are the seed growing in the good soil, because we strive to follow Christ. And then we look at those outside the church and see how the seed of God's word struggles. But don't be complacent! For me, at least, I know that there are times when I am the rock-hard soil, or the seed which is overrun by competing weeds. It isn't easy or simple to be the fertile soil. It takes time and effort, and doesn't come naturally. As a family, we've done some

gardening in the last few months. It's easy to plant the seed. It is the weeding, the feeding and remembering to water that takes the time and the effort. What are you doing to keep yourself a place where the word of Christ can take root and thrive in you? As more things open up and life returns to a new sort of normal, now is the time to establish a new routine of prayer, Bible reading and spending time with God that you can sustain and that will sustain you.

But it is not just ourselves we should be thinking about. What about others? What are we doing to help others be a place where the seed of God's word can take root and grow? Now, back to the buddleia. No one would imagine that high above on the side of a bridge would be a place for a plant to grow, But grow it does. Look out for the likely and the unlikely places where God can be found and encouraged. There have been reports of more people turning to the church and services over the last few months, despite our buildings being closed. What can you do to help people see it? If there's been a reflection that has spoken to you and you think might speak to someone else, could you have given them a copy and suggest that they read it, and perhaps you could talk about it with them. It can be easier for you and them than inviting to church on a Sunday morning.

But it's not just about what we do, it's also who we are in sowing the seed and tending the soil ...

*A boy carried water in two buckets from the well. One was perfect; the other had several holes. Every time on the way back the leaky bucket would end up half-empty. The leaky bucket was sad and began to cry. The other bucket noticed and asked why. "I am imperfect and can't keep the water from pouring through the holes on my sides," explained the leaky bucket.*

*"But," said the bucket without holes, "look to the side of the road I passed over. It is barren." Then pointing to the flowers on the other side of the road, it said, "See these beautiful flowers? These are here only because of the water you sprinkle on them. They owe their life to you."*

May all you do and are help others to receive the word of God. May it grow in you and in all whom you meet.

---

## **Prayer for the week**

God be with us, God be in us.  
God be around us, God be behind us.  
Sow in our hearts the good seed  
of love and joy and peace.  
May we be a blessing  
to the people around us. Amen.      *(from Roots)*

---

## **Worshipping Together in Church**

Plans are in place in the hope that we can safely return to worship together from Sunday 2 August. However, to begin with, services will be different.

Before and leaving church, you will need to use hand sanitiser. We'll need your contact details because of the government's Track and Trace service. Although (at the moment of writing) masks are not required to be worn, there will be social distancing of one metre plus. Numbers attending worship will be limited and stewards will probably escort you to a seat.

There will be no singing, which means that services will be shorter. Once the service is finished we will need to leave church. We can't serve tea and coffee yet, so if you want to chat please do this outside.

Please do not attend church if you still have to be isolated, if you are unwell or have possible Covid-19 symptoms, or if you do not feel confident or safe. This mailing will still continue by post and/or email and online.

---

## Sunday on the BBC

### Sunday 12 July

8.10 am **Sunday Worship** Radio 4 (93.5FM)

'Sowing in a Time of Uncertainty' – South Wales Baptist College considers the Parable of the Sower.

1.15 pm **Songs of Praise** BBC1

See Aled Jones reveal the UK's top ten hymns again.

### Sunday 19 July

8.10 am **Sunday Worship** Radio 4 (93.5FM)

'A Word for All Seasons' – how 'the God who speaks' meets us in the changing circumstances of our lives.

1.15 pm **Songs of Praise** BBC1

(details not yet known)

---

## Methodist Sunday Services on the Web

- Contemporary worship from Swan Bank Methodist Church: [youtube.com/user/SwanBank](https://www.youtube.com/user/SwanBank)
- From Westminster Central Hall, London: [youtube.com/user/MCHWevents/videos](https://www.youtube.com/user/MCHWevents/videos)
- From Wesley's Chapel: [youtube.com/channel/UCUAUqhmhevz5sqhh72LIMxA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUAUqhmhevz5sqhh72LIMxA)
- *Sthie [at home]* – from the Isle of Man, a different style of worship taking place at home: [youtube.com/andyfishburne](https://www.youtube.com/andyfishburne)

---

## Future Readings

**19 July:** Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43; Romans 8:12-25

**26 July:** Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52; Romans 8:26-39

**2 August:** Matthew 14:13-21; Romans 9:1-5